TO SEW A FREEDOM SUIT

Take measurements to determine the size of it.
How lavish the jacket and sleeves, the inseam.
Appraise from shoulder to shoulder its width.
Measure neck, chest, waist. Note
Its dimensions on brown paper. Otherwise
In the green field of your imagining.
When and where you will wear your suit.
Consider. Running
An errand in town, as if for another?
(Knowing to hide in plain view as a kind of candor.)
Jumping the broom or another revelation
Of a grand joy? Which design to espouse?
Three-piece with jacket and pants ideal for winter?
Vest for keeping cool where there is
No winter? Dress of preposterous number
Of buttons? Make the pattern. Choose
Your fabric. Pin the paper blueprint to your
Cloth. Cut along the edges of the paper
Pattern pieces, then cut again along the flanks
Of your green field's imagining.

—*Danielle Legros Georges*

THE ARRANGEMENT

If not for the little girl whose father
was a buzzing bee that quickly flitted on
to other blossoms she would have never
let me take her hand.

But her mother said,
"Your daughter needs a father."
So we stood together in that little church
to speak the holy words.

And I always pretended not to notice
the way she'd sometimes stare into space
hands wrapped around her coffee mug
or sit alone in the back yard
in the shade of an oak tree
listening to a robin's carefree song
while dreaming of some other life
she might have lived.

—Charles Coe

SPACE ANGEL

I speak for distant moons
staring down at their planets
unfazed by the doings.
Their crimes and innocences
are one and the same
to moons. I circle round. I witness.
I have remote cameras and
sensors reporting back to God.
They sometimes check the
monitors. Earth's moon
notes a strange shift.
I challenge it to shoot
some static at the screen to
get God's attention.
Perhaps They will take note.
Things are burning.

—Linda Haviland Conte

DEAR POETRY, DEAR CRUMBLING HEART

Imagining America one year after the 2024 presidential election

The crumbling will continue:
Chunks like icebergs calving into obsidian seas

You can barely feel your fingers
as you warm them over small fires

There has been a year of darkness
There will be more

Some will resort to prayer: *Hail Mary Praise Allah In the Name of …*
Dead angels will wash up on shore

No longer able to communicate in customary ways
you will embroider, by hand, these messages few can decipher

Things will be erased
cut off cut out

Barking at night will grow closer
Cups of Ambien will not drown it out

You will have to extemporize
going forward

The maps have been destroyed
The words destroyed

You will learn halting guttural sounds
to speak new poems with your stump of a tongue

—Lee Varon

LOVE'S WINDOW

mountains greet you. blue green wonder.
the colors of the day open to you. every shade of dahlia
is here and if you gaze far enough sun flowers nod at you
in rows of belonging. meadows tremble.
you belong here, to the Earth. listen closely to the voice.
at first you don't recognize it. she has been gone so long.
your Nonna beckons you her face in the sun beaming.
she points to the flowers teaches you their names.

—*Deborah Leipziger*

HEAVENLY BODIES

What are we looking for
in the hills and valleys of our bodies—
the nook of an elbow,
fleshiness of an earlobe,
curve of a hip,
crevices of a belly button?

How desperately we long for the flesh of another,
their breathe,
panting eyes,
and pulsing apendages?

Tongues, worms ploughing through soil,
explore human terrain.

We explode like supernovas into each other—
break apart into millions of pieces
and fall back to earth.

—*Miriam Manglani*

WHETHER A FOREST IS LIKE QUICKSAND AND IF YOU'RE LOST IN IT

You won't remember the names of the wildflowers,
coltsfoot and *speedwell, foxglove* and *forget-me-not.*

I name them for my sake. If I can learn to listen
to the silence between your words, maybe I'll hear

meadowlarks singing the score of the hoarfrost.
Let me be nimble enough. Let there be a few

gentle hills before the heartbreak. Will there be
no end to falling? Yes, I know sagebrush

is meant to blow away. Stars die and new ones
are born. Without my consent. Nothing, I know,

will ever be as it once was. The photo of
the two of us on the wall is like light

from a distant star. When your words are gone—
oh, sing for me the trees into green.

—*Wendy Drexler*

EPIGENICS

Never mind there's no way not to be
my parent's bleeding scars.
I have tried—

a type of laser removal
to get rid of DIY stick and poke
one must use a scalpel

or an orthoscope
to remove.
My rotted out

valve, my casts,
crooked healed breaks, are fine.
Could be worse,

I have managed:
taken the pills,
mended my arrhythmia,

digested ivory round acid
droplets, and still my heart explodes
for the boys made

fathers that run from the potential
they may stand in front of CPS
one day and explain, "Oh,

those cracked ribs?" From the CPR
I had to do to save him; you see,
like me he just faints.

A heart condition; nevertheless,
it's normal. My boy's tough
he can stand it, it's good for him."

Nevertheless,
I beg to see you
in me

as mist
rising through trees at dawn
from a bed of snow

melting under unnamable gore:
hunted, panting,
alone—

—Ryan Clinesmith Montalvo

WELLFLEET

for Vivian Pornoy 1960-1997

There were the cantaloupes your mother bought for breakfast,
the beach balls and the blow-up rafts –
when we approached the cottage, your father would cut the engine
and let the VW wagon coast to the driveway –
you liked to spend hours lying in the sun until your body turned brown,
and you were a stickler about brushing your teeth –
often, I tried to take your picture, but you closed your eyes –
once, as we horsed around, I spanked you,
and, once, you got me to play house though I thought it was a silly game –
later, I heard you became a psychologist, married and had a child,
but I know only that summer in Wellfleet with you
when nothing could be more fun

—Ron A. Kalman

WHEN I LEARNED ABOUT BIRDS

Central Park
Starlings at dusk
Swirl like brushstrokes from God.

*

Now, our window faces
A clay road where quail run –
Plumes comb the morning air.

*

The sound of our garden fountain
Calls the humming birds
Who nest in the acacia.

*

It is the finches
Who follow – yellow faces
Outlined in black.

*

Evening, a sole
Orange-breasted one appears –
Pregnant mother bird.

—*Rachel Weintraub*

THE CHEF STANDS IN HIS GARDEN

Honeybee. Butterfly. Goldfinch hanging upside down.
Creamy white hostas. A spray of bright pollen covers the leaves like sifted flour.
The breeze mixes them all
  When the Chef stands in his Garden.
He tastes the air, blends scents and colors in his mind,
breathes deeply, imagining his sweet creation draped in pale icing
with fleshy red rose petals strewn across the top.
  As the Chef stands in his Garden,
he layers them all, dusts them with glowing golden pollen.
Then smiles. Then sighs. Then closes his eyes.
Like a trifle, layer on layer, life is sweet
To the Chef, standing still in his garden.

—Patti Cassidy

ASTONISHMENT

The leaves had just returned
to the waiting trees.

How do they do it? I asked aloud,
though I was alone
in the afternoon.

I looked out the window.
The wind increased.

The leaves let the air
bathe their tongues, their fingers,
their hieroglyphs.

Wouldn't you like to know,
the oak said,
in the way trees speak.

—Jennifer Barber

AS THE LIGHT FADES

I read the poem
Joe loves most

where I was peaceful in the grass
stillness almost complete—

In this dank room a rank
scent of food left untouched

The air has gone still
yesterday it moved around us

like a slight wind
winding through leaves

Ruthie, I hate this place

I stroke his thin
mottled hand

I hate it too Joe

A teaspoon of chocolate pudding—
he whispers*: Take it away*

I move it swiftly to the metal table
that swings like a robotic arm

The spoon falls
with a tinny ring

He sinks deeper into the sheets
like a puddle evaporating after rain

Dusk gathers around us
outside small songbirds crowd

the hanging feeder releasing crystal notes
like bells into the clouds

Out of the dusky air he says:
Sweetheart, how beautiful of you to come

—Ruth Chad

HAVE YOU TIME FOR A CHAT?

The feel of time is smooth as beach sand through your fingers
Sharp as betrayal by your lover
Tedious as husking corn
Tendentious as returning bruised peaches to the market
Frightening as the thought of it as measuring stick for life
Obtuse as when science attempts its definition
Angering as its expiration at critical moments
Glorious as when wasted by choice.
Such is poetic contemplation but
I report to you with chagrin and terror
Experiences from the edge of time:
Emptiness of imagination
Loss of hope
Uselessness of plans
Burial or burning
No person's feet to touch yours in the night.
I have found appeals to my god untimely.
Oh—yes—to your god too.

—*Stephen Honig*

FRIDAY NIGHT MRI

The tech with the false eyelashes and
mordant sense of humor fits on
the Hannibal Lechter mask – *perfect*

for Halloween! – after pinching my earplugs
into cones for me. Kindness. I am
her last screen of the last day

of the week and she is a soda can
overspilling. *My first and last patients*
get the BEST me, she says

and slides me into the tube.
Every terrible sound blares but
for this test you can't move so

I pretend I'm pancake batter
spreading with each exhale.
You're doing great! This next one

is four minutes. Batter, I'm batter.
I choose a restaurant for later,
imagine the world's largest margarita

while my brain does its star turn,
showing all my secrets to this lovely
young woman who can't wait to leave.

—Laura Cherry

EVERYTHING FOUND, FINALLY, WITHIN

slabs of muscle woven onto rib and ulna
larded with brown and yellow fat
all the colors of the Last Supper
Judas-blue veins, Christ-red fascia
and inside the inside: planetary DNA
satellite nuclei in a galaxy
of discontent, the irreconcilables
hounded to hairy groin and armpit
What brought me here?
Come inside, the skin replies,
flay and find the RNA that dozed
in the sun and the one that lost
its shopping list, the indolent,
the forgetful, and the over-
compensating cell in the making
and remaking, the new of renewal
Come again? *Repeat and rinse!*
Pay attention dear DNA! Replicate!
Replicate! Stay on track!
Don't add! Don't subtract!
Inside, all will be found,
and found out.

—Mary Buchinger

AN OUTING

Say, heart, would you like to go for a walk today,
fly ahead of me down the sidewalk
in a top-grain cowhide harness strapped to the beat?
Me lashed to the routes you fancy:
past the artists' studios in a foam-rubber factory,
past Pooh and Friends, spewing kids
roped together like toddler ducklings,
bright yellow T-shirts flapping at their knees?

Cupid wannabe that you are, I know you'll leap over
uneven bars invisible, try to stick a landing,
sidle up to strangers
who'll startle from their reveries,
undone by a heart on a leash.
There'll be some weather, you know,
and if you start to sing, I'll pretend I don't know you.
Come on, let's go.

—Dori Hale

HENENI

To stop ambition's wheel
is not a death wish to lie
under grass, but to stroll
on solid earth—dirt, sand,
loam, best if moss—feeling
the pressure underfoot as earth
responds to the presence
and pressure of my heel down
to ball down and imperceptible
slight rise alternate to other heel.

Heneni I am here I am ready
says Moses in the Wilderness
answering the call of the lord
of cloud and fire. Heneni I say
to my toes' overarching pleasure
to clutch--digging into the blades
or curls feeling the squish of green
connect me to all our origins--
to extend—moving forward
unknowing to no pre-set place.

—Karen Klein

BODY BINGO

The pats of my body
talk to each other.
Tney are polite.

“You can go now
My eyes say to my ankle.
Oh, no, says my ankle.

It’s not my turn.
The next day the elbow
speaks up: I want to go .

Get back in line, ankle
shouts. Stomach has
been waiting her turn.

So one pain takes over
while the others wait till
it’s time to explode.

—Marge Piercy

IF YOU TAKE TIME

If you take time to look for it,
to get right down on your knees
in the wet grass after a rain

and closely look at one leaf
after another, turning them over,
especially the multi-colored

leaves of a crabapple, yellows
and burgundies and of course
greens, leaves with torn corners,

with parts eaten, some attached
to each other at the ends
of their stems as if they’d been

holding hands as they fell,
among them you’ll find a leaf
with a little more God in it

than the others. That’s the one
to carry back to your house
and press into a book, or to just

place it back where you found it
and turn away, with wet knees,
a lot lighter at heart.

—Ted Kooser

TWO DREAMS AND RAIN

I organize a family concert.
Each sibling plays a piece.
Our eldest sister brings Trump
alcohol, 180 proof. *That's gotta be illegal*, I think.

My spare bedroom is across
the street, the street is in
another state, the tyrant
has bombed the state.

Invisible raindrops
suddenly sparkle on utility
wires like dribbling bling. I watch
them form and fall, form
and fall.

—Eileen McCluskey

ONE LIFE

a bird flew up to the feeder
and is invisible or else was only
a shadow among the long
tendrils of mulberry
in my little backyard
and now a real sparrow darts off
today will be another hot day

I worked yesterday
on a very long poem one I keep
remembering and adding to
including some bits
about Eva how she stays
in the core of me
with other beloveds now gone
and I knew each in my way
none fully —

oh mourning dove calling
into the wind your haunting
chant always the same

—Hilary Sallick

WHEN ADJECTIVES NIXED NOUNS

One day, en masse, the adjectives rebelled
against presumptuous, grabby, quick-hit nouns
that thought they owned all adjectives outright.
The nouns needed attendance, felt lost
on their own, meaning more than their meaning—
one adjective more. The quandary simmered
in the pits of syntax, and syntax
threw up its hands, as if it had hands.
"What's going on down there"
yelled the governors, the ones that watch
from the haughty clouds of qualified
expression—"Can't woo an adjective?
And you call yourselves nouns?"
The nouns were abashed, while the adjectives
giggled or cackled, depending
how refined or coarse they were.
The lonelier nouns settled into rest homes;
the bolder slogged on, on their own.
The buzz that fills the literate air
is adjectives, still wilfully employed;
in lieu of nouns, they modify each other
and occupy no space upon the page—
which is all nouns, bare trees, a chastened forest.

—Tomas O'Leary

“OUR FRIENDS HAVE A YACHT IN BARCELONA”

These are words I am unlikely to ever say
and when they floated toward me on the path
along the river, they conjured images of

F. Scott Fitzgerald cavorting with Zelda
on the Mediterranean, three sheets to the wind,
eating caviar and drinking champagne

on the deck in bright sun, a gentle breeze blowing.
And while the words may seem pretentious,
they were said casually, as if she were talking

about taking a motorboat out on the Charles
with some Watertown pals, when in fact her
friends are probably international financiers,

which I am not and will never be. But I
do aspire to write prose like the Fitzgerald
of *Gatsby*, and if that should lead to having

champagne and caviar on a friend’s yacht in
Barcelona, I would not disdain the opportunity
to feel the wind on my happily smiling face.

—*Lawrence Kessenich*

MIXED MARTIAL ARTS

It's the second horn alarms you.
The first could be a singularity, benign tumor
or prodigious skin tag. The second,
though misaligned and happily
for your self-esteem hidden behind a bang,
hints of a deeper, more Rosicrucian design.

Now you sport baseball caps, let sedans pricier
than yours cut you off
without an obscene oath or manic stab of the car horn.
Panhandlers view you as a softer touch.
To be safe you stay late at work and wait for your boss to leave.
Pay your credit off before you get the bill.

Watching your wife bend to slip flats on for yoga
you wonder. What of this new-found
fondness for sriracha and mixed martial arts?
Why this smell of brimstone everywhere,
even in the bedroom,
though neither of you has opened a pack of cigarettes for years?

Could a demiurge survive unrelenting emptiness?

When no one is looking you feel for the nascent horn
and, finding it, titter,
the prick of pain almost a pleasure.

—Kurt Olsson

OH, OBITUARY!

Way before it got so hip, when scrawny trees and kids
scuffled for sun and policemen crouched on street corners,
guns extended, telling hapless perpetrators to freeze; and evenings,

women's keys poked, cocked between their knuckles,
I lived in Brooklyn with a man—disheveled,
distraught, already once divorced, a diary of sorrow,

who asked me if I meant it when I said I loved him
and I said yes though really, I was only hungry for confusion.
He loved jazz, Beethoven, and Jackson Browne,

but something about him felt abridged—his downturned
head, his hair's uncertain red, the freckled aura of defeat.
My mother said he chewed gum all through her second

marriage ceremony. We lasted a couple of years and
then lost touch. So what did it mean that he lived a life
I didn't know—of work, wife, daughter, going to mass (for heaven

sakes!) then getting old? The tiny kitchen on Henry Street,
my rudeness to his sister, the bathroom painted molasses-
brown: did those images persist in his brain too,

along with Miranda having been (when I was seven
or eight) my favorite name? So frilly, childish, pink—
I loved it then but never dreamed of naming my own

child that. The stories we tell! All lies till the obit.
Miranda wrote his—quite well, though I'm nowhere in it.

—Ruth Hoberman

DOPPELGANGER

Who is this stranger, slow-walking on a cane
taking an hour to wobble around the block

jacket buttoned crooked, white hair askew,
body folded like a quesadilla

someone, certainly not me, can't get up off the floor
at Safeway where she is searching on the lowest shelf

for the tiny fish in a yellow can
the manager looks alarmed, asks if she needs help

no I say firmly, struggling to get up
the stranger holds out a hand, looking relieved

someone certainly not me, forgets
birthdays, recipes, names of grandkids

I remember how to make Puttanesca sauce
and Jason's (Justin's?) birthday is in January or is it June?

missing words stacked like stones in a cairn
tarriff, avocado, anchovies

I no longer feel fastened to this world
I check the mirror to find evidence of myself

there is a shadow behind me
that looks like me
        only older

—Claire Scott

THIS POEM I MEANT TO WRITE

but didn't get to—I fell asleep
in the bathtub this afternoon—

the water level, too shallow
for the full satisfaction of a soak,

the bath, long enough to crunch my bones
into a most uncomfortable prone—

my knees open to the cool air,
my belly floating at the surface—

a half-disclosed rubber moon—
my neck curled stiffly into the tub's back,

with all this lacking—the paltry
depth, my aching bones,

this nagging masterpiece
yet unwritten still drones

under my utter exhaustion
from the previous night's churn—

over which form, what music,
and where I might insert

a most clever caesura—
under this, my mouth draws

open, my eyes close,
my breath fills with steam—

I begin the poem
from the depths
of sleep.

—Carla Schwartz

BRILLIANT

The poem is lonely.
- Paul Celan

While my poems love
when I write them into exotic
locales and situations, they've come to appreciate,
with real affection, a simple walk
around the block—the poems are becoming me:
aware of the grand that is only a few feet away,
not even mentioning the mind and the heart.
My latest poem and I stood on our street
where I pointed out the sun going down
in a dignified manner, a dying yellow that still
dazzled, it was a beauty, what words we would evoke
together. "You're brilliant," my poem said.
"No," I said, "you're brilliant." We were both right.

—Tim Suermondt

BASEBALL CARD BUBBLEGUM

You could buy one card
with a piece of pink bubblegum
covered in white powder for a penny
or a five card pack with a stick of
bubblegum for a nickel

It had its own odor, perfume for a
young boy's nose, a slab about three
inches long, a little over an inch wide

The front teeth would break it up as it
entered the mouth, back teeth working
it into a juicy, sticky blob which tongue,
mouth, breath could blow and shape into
a bubble

The bubble always burst, as did childhood fantasies

—Zvi A. Sesling

DOLL IN THE BEDROOM

at the Wenham Historical Museum, MA

I am the one in the grey blanket
lying in the splintered cradle

at the foot of the bed. My bonnet is dusty.
My face brown ash. My smile sewn in place.

I've been here since Sarah Hale, accused of witchcraft,
was cleared by the good judge, her husband. Sometimes,

I think I remember the children hanging me in her stead
then coffining me here for expiation.

After closing time, I restless roam
just as you fear I might. The pretty dolls

stay mute. Stay still. Eyes unblinking
as I whisk by. Too big to fit

in the French dollhouse, with its warning,
Don't Touch, its fancy carved furniture, tiny chandeliers.

All night I ride the circling train
to nowhere, crying "All Aboard."

—Kathleen Aguero

SO

Because the director of the FBI
had written *The Plot Against the King*
and two more children's books about King Trump—

Because Franklin Graham prayed
Blessed be the Name of God, He removes
kings, He raises up kings at the inauguration—

Because Trump King Brand
even then sold King Trump Royalty
T-shirts (imported) in six colors and four sizes—

we shouldn't have been surprised when he said
(and then the T-shirts also said) LONG
LIVE THE KING and it was so

—Martha Collins

OLD WHITE GUY: FAITH

Faith the word
popped up in the breaking waters
of the birth of a poem about our fathers

Faith the phenomenon
bobbed on the flood of crosscurrents
in the growing of a poem about our fathers' conflicts

Faith the girl
snub-nosed, gap-toothed, breath-taking,
floated in a mundane lit class
        and drenched my heart.

Faith! Oh Faith!
wraith-like, eponymous, ethereal,
your river disappeared in the sea
how could I have forgotten you?

—Llyn Clague

HERO

The sun ablaze at its zenith,
Homer's Odysseus scans the horizon,
his future opaque as he hunches forward
on a rocky point that juts into the water,
the only barren patch
in the lushness of Calypso's island.
A bead of sweat trickles down his brow
and mingles with his tears, salty as sea-brine.
Prone to plotting—his wiles legendary—
the warrior languishes, constrained to perceive
each day as a notch on the stick of his captivity,
his prowess unwound like one of his wife's spindles.
Is this a hero? Homer asks.

Tennyson offers a different gloss on epic expectations,
on loss of prowess. His Ulysses watches his horizon
darken with the knowledge that his decline
hurtles at him headlong, the flush of every victory
long past. To stave off death, he entreats his mariners
to roam with him in one last venture,
boldly seeking the ever-receding rim of the world—
though they risk being swept beneath a wave's deep furrow,
though their skin might melt under the sky's fiery eye.

Which king is more heroic? The adventurer who surveys
the scope of what is still possible and hoists his sail?
Or the voyager who, aching for his heart's hearth-mate,
resists temptation, refusing immortality to reach home?

—Patricia L. Hamilton

STEP INTO REALITY

1

Above the not-yet-sun touches grey an airplane grumbles
the unseen mole worries the lawn with dirt heaps
the crows are quiet near strangers speak
of fractured days and nights
they ask what does it mean to confront
the question somewhere there might be moments
to awake to step into this day of sun rain wind split-pine

2

If you keep your eyes shut
what is there before you if you can't hear
does the crow call if your hands don't stroke
is the dog here if you don't bite
is the peach ripe Step by step
do your feet feel the burn of sun baked asphalt
the slip of cool stones in the brook

3

What are bodies for but to enclose the world burst open
run through wild spaces of sun and storm where
is the child that led the way rolling down
hills to the brook where is the one who walked
on planks over cellar holes to see what
the men were building

Where are they who climbed the gymnasium roof
to watch unseen the world pass

—Molly Mattfield Bennett

17 YEARS AFTER YOUR SUICIDE

the time you threw your morning
coffee at a skunk

cigarettes you left behind
when we rushed you to the hospital

the psych ER's plastic chairs
TV news, Princess Diana killed

first date, sushi then
drinks at Top of the Hub

ridiculous kisses
belly laughs

how I learned
which eye was tracking

Lilac Sunday, Arnold Arboretum
sun and gloom

bitterness
St. John's Seminary, your brothers

Snow Falling on Cedars
your secret collapse

how suicide
sticks around

our walls patched
colorful now

our daughter still not ready for that
box in the attic, your poems and fedora

—Eileen McCluskey

EVERMORE

Before you, they spin out, the asteroids.
The velocity takes your breath away.
You're numbered well among the paranoids:
You veer left, without need, toward yesterday.

The velocity takes your breath away,
Around you, thoughts flicker like lightning bugs.
You veer left, without need, toward yesterday,
Burnt fields unfolding. Some memory tugs.

Around you, thoughts flicker like lightning bugs,
A leveling of life's essential sight.
Burnt fields unfolding, some memory tugs,
Each cosmos transfigures to satellite.

A leveling of life's essential sight,
As if by magic, you mimic what is.
Each cosmos transfigures to satellite.
All else bedazzles the eternal fizz.

As if by magic you mimic what is,
You're numbered well among the paranoids.
All else bedazzles the eternal fizz,
Before you, they spin out, the asteroids.

—Dennis Daly

A TRIBUTE TO DANIELLE LEGROS GEORGES (1964-2025)

By Martha Collins

When Danielle Legros Georges passed away earlier this year, I, like many others, lost a dear friend.

I met Danielle in the 1990s, when she was a participant in a summer translation workshop at the William Joiner Institute at UMass Boston. Some years later she became a colleague who taught that workshop herself and was instrumental in welcoming more writers of color into the Joiner community.

In the years between and beyond, I knew her as a writer whose stunning poems seamlessly fused the personal and the political; as a poetic innovator who took enormous risks in her work; as a researcher who transformed history into beautiful poems; as a translator who carefully brought the important work of Haitian women poets to our attention; as a social activist whose work on behalf of others extended far beyond her written work; and as a friend with whom I shared both deep sadness and grief, and abundant laughter and joy—a woman who shared herself and her many gifts both deeply and widely.

Born in Haiti and raised in Boston, Danielle graduated from Emerson College, earned her MFA in Creative Writing from New York University, and served as Professor and later Director of the Creative Writing MFA Program at Lesley University. She received numerous fellowships and awards, including an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Humane Letters from Emerson College, and in 2024 was inducted into the American Antiquarian Society and named a Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by France's Ministry of Culture.

Many of her awards and recognitions were also opportunities for service. As Boston's Poet Laureate from 2015 until 2019, she worked tirelessly to bring poetry to the lives of ordinary Bostonians. She partnered with museums and libraries, sponsored poetry workshops for students and elders, collaborated with musicians and photographers, and brought poetry to the attention of the entire city through POETRY ON THE T, the innovative sidewalk installation Raining Poetry, *City of Notions: An Anthology of Contemporary Boston Poems*, and other projects. She was on the Board of Directors of the New England Poetry Club, for which she spearheaded the creation of two awards for BIPOC poets and projects, one of which is now named for her. She was also a valued member of the Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston's Artist Advisory Council, a founding member of the the Haitian Artists Assembly of Massachusetts (HAAM), and one of the lead editors of HAAM's *Anthology of Haitian Poets of Massachusetts*. Her public service will extend beyond her lifetime, as it continues to touch people in the many communities she loved and served.

But Danielle will be remembered best and longest for her poems, which draw from all of these communities, small and large. She first explored her Haitian heritage, as well as her early life in Boston, in *Maroon* (2001). In *The Dear Remote Nearness of You* (2016), winner of the New England Poetry Club's Sheila Margaret Motton prize, she created boldly experimental poems to deal with such disturbingly timely subjects as racism in Boston and the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, as well as exquisite lyrics in praise of her friends and loves, her neighborhood and its people, her city and its surroundings.

A year later, she published the chapbook *Letters from Congo*, which included translations of letters her parents wrote from the Congo when they worked there in the 1960s. The chapbook was a precursor to her stunning full-length collection *Three Leaves, Three Roots: Poems on the Haiti–Congo Story*, which was published less than a month before her passing and from which she gave an impressive number of readings during the final weeks of her life. Expanding her territory beyond family stories into the histories of colonial and post-colonial Haiti and Congo required an enormous amount of research, and transforming it into dazzlingly memorable poems led Danielle into an ever-expanding reservoir of poetic innovation.

In her final published book, a chapbook completed before and published just months after her passing, Danielle continued to transform history into poetry as she turned once again to the city and region where she lived. Aided by research grants, *Acts of Resistance to New England Slavery by Africans Themselves in New England* took her far back into history as she continued to integrate documentary material into deeply moving lyrics.

Danielle's adept adaptation of research into poems was paralleled by, and I think related to, her practice of literary translation. In the last years of her life, she translated and published two volumes of poems by Haitian women: *Island Heart: The Poems of Ida Faubert* (2021) and *Blue Flare: Three Haitian Poets: Évelyne Trouillot, Marie-Célie Agnant, Maggy de Coster (2024)*. A similarly transformative work was *Wheatley at 250: Black Women Poets Re-imagine the Verse of Phillis Wheatley Peters,* co-edited with Bethany Artress White and published in 2023. I think it's no accident that these books feature women poets. All of Danielle's books, from the earliest on, include memorable portraits and mentions of women, and in her poetic accounts of the Haiti-Congo connection and New England slavery, she was careful, as history often is not, to focus on women as much as men.

As in her poems, so in her friendships. Even in the darkest times, knowing Danielle Legros Georges was a joy. I miss her. I will always miss her. But I will always have her poems.

OUR TIMES

A dozen Guernicas,
Without the outrage.

Truth tossed
Like a used Styrofoam cup.

“Never Again”
Like mercury in the palm.

The vastness of the indifferent
Universe offers a cold comfort.

Petty men convince themselves
They are the center.

A scientist brings up
A small ring of ash

From deep in the soil, a warning
Of catastrophe from another time.

Black holes cause time
To slow down. space to warp.

And yet….
And yet, every child.

—Michael Ansara

RENDITION

Rendering unto Caesar what,
even the Christ informs us,
was foolish to believe
ours in the first place

*

Rendering each carcass to remove the impurities
souring the meat, sullying the fat—
those poisons taken in from what they ate,
and what we eat, and what eats us in turn.
No, there's no escaping it.
And yes, that's what you're smelling.

*

In the middle of the night,
yanked from bed, hooded,
manacled, thrown into an un-
marked van, a cargo hold,
a Black Mariah, a black site cell—rendition
with or without the government's permission,
with or without the knowledge of the governed.

*

I will render this one last courtesy
and look you in the eye when I inform you
that others have already informed and,
at this very moment, men in black balaclavas
without credentials, without uniforms,
are banging on front doors of the homes, apartments,
of family, friends, associates, rendering them helpless—
and yes, the *end* is embedded in the very word.

*

No, you can't save them.
But yes, your confession, signed here, rendered
into several languages and distributed to the foreign press,
may go a long way toward saving you
at least a modicum of discomfort.

*

Those voices you're hearing, pleading, shrieking—

yes, you do recognize them— but no,
these are only the preliminaries.
When the real work begins, their screams
will be unrecognizable as anything human.

*

Pain compounded by the pain
of knowing you allowed all this to happen—
what you did, what you did not do
in time. Too late now. Too late always.
Fate and *too late*—the chiming refrain
in our new national anthem.
And yes, we're recording your soulful rendition—
broadcast throughout the stadium,
it will rend even the stubbornest hope,
the most deep-rooted intransigence,
reddening every face, branding every heart.
Imagine now, your fellow countrymen,
hats in hand, hands across their hearts,
singing along in unison, pledging dread allegiance,
as the Emperor smiles down from the flickering screen
and, of course, not a dry eye among them.

—Steve Ratiner

ALLEGIANCE

If the white stripes stood for peace
and the red for war, our flag by now
would look retrieved from a lake of blood.

The stars hate being marched in rows,
incarcerated in their midnight cellblock,
they mutter about resisting but comply.

Hoisted on a thin chain in the wind,
the flag pops like a gunshot or pretends
it is on a speedboat going someplace

where corpses don't cry out for justice,
where, high above us, it can insist on
innocence to anyone who'll stand for it.

—Richard Hoffman

SORROW IN EIN QINIYYE

Her sorrow becomes potent
The crumbled wall waits
to vanish entirely

Level on the ground

She prays to the sky
for an angel
Being engulfed by the Holy does not transpire
Her tears bear no worth

A soldier bends down and gives her part of a candy bar
Feels a burden
He is the adversary who does not want to fight

Like her, he waits for an answer, *glory or humiliation*
in this mountainous village but
only hears gunfire

—Gloria Mindock

HE FLEW PIGEONS

We knew he was the Super
who lived in the basement
across the street. He fixed leaks
checked the boiler, smiled
at tenants. He made
the building hum.

Evenings, he was on the roof
tending small cages, opening doors.
He clapped :::
    Dozens of white pigeons
    flew like a huge wing
    across Seventy-third
    They banked left
    turned south
    on Broadway
    then west
    A ballet just after sunset :::

Rumor had it his family was Dominican.
Not one of us would have asked
for his Documents.

*—Madeleine Fuchs Holze*r

IVAN,

our home town's only Russian.
Only Russian anywhere
we'd ever been. We figured
all Russian guys had that name.
(Well, Boris on Bullwinkle…)

We'd find him on the court when
we arrived there, after school.
We figured he could shoot, he
practiced, he was tall; why not
let him play? The problem was

he'd always quit, well before
the game ended. We'd be pissed
to see him walk off without
a word. We were fanatics.
We were Johnny Havlicek!

But he made no excuses.
He was tired, that's all. He'd leave,
and he'd be back the next day
practicing, god knows what for.
Practicing to quit again.

That was fifty years ago.
In a dream, one of the guys
told me, "He's in his coffin."
Like that—a matter of fact.
That's not to say Ivan died;

he just got tired. He lay down
in a coffin and stayed there,
for weeks. Not for the first time.
He'd rest a while, then get up.
It had become his practice.

—*Alfred Nicol*

NO DOUBT

No doubt, the world will spin at least another day
If we don't manage, first, to blow it away.
No doubt, the sun will stoke its solar cauldron
And blaze its way through particulate haze.

No doubt, the car will begin its daily itinerary
Unless the starter doesn't or the transmission
Rejects its duty lost in dreams of pristine gleam.

No doubt, the news won't be new:
The usual invasion of this or that;
Similar flare-ups of simmering spats.
Let's don rose lenses for more positive views.

No doubt, spring will get a jump start with mud puddles to leap.
No doubt, the tabby will stalk adventurous scents
On every random zephyr. See how he restlessly paces
Past rocking chairs on lakeside porch.

No doubt, the Great Blue will glide to his favorite space,
Its resting place on upgraded dock. An eagle will circle
In its majestic gyre; an osprey will win the race against diving prey.

No doubt, gestating bulbs will bloom in the garden despite
Wintry exile. Floral troops will rally as seasons revolve.
Verdant spring will spread its cheer and charm.

No doubt, the sea will surge higher than prior bounds
In tandem with violent swings of untethered weather
Unless we treasure succoring measures.

No doubt, might sadly still triumphs over the meek
Who wistfully long to inherit what's left of the earth,
Although citizen brigades are joining arms
To oppose the growing conflagration.

No doubt, we will ask muscular wind to aid the land,
To render harmless extreme pesticides that plot havoc
And massive future homicides.

No doubt, the no-longer silent alarm sounds
The clarion to rouse the caretakers of our troubled orb
And tend to mend our interwoven strands.

No doubt, the human wave will ascend
To arrest the wanton greed of mammon's
Bottom- line. The world no longer has
The leisure to wait for the healing hand.

—Harris Gardner

NO SPRING SONG
Yes, springtime opens
wide its warmth again.
But inspires
        no poem of joy

from me.
        The brilliant shock
of yellow daffodils
only blurs my eyes with pain.

The little birds
        that crack
the air with their piercing cries
only voice my grief

for Betty
        who--this year--
can no longer celebrate
her April birthday.

—Robert K. Johnson

AT THE MOUTH OF THE OTTER RIVER

There was a bay here once – it silted up.
A single channel ties river to tide:
shallow, narrow, serpentine.

Boys fish here; egrets strut, ducks feed
at dusk. August's full moon climbs
above sandstone cliffs, alerts

legions of birds. They pour from the sky
with raucous calls, each kind alights
in its own place, as if assigned –

the estuary fills with noisy joy. Oh,
may their wild cries echo always
across moon-swept nights.

—Denise Provost

AMBULANCE

A moonless night.
Everything outside as dark
as inside a coffin.
When the EMTs arrived,
they checked vitals,
IV'd him, loaded him onto
the stretcher and slid
him into the ambulance.
Inside was so lit up,
as bright as we imagine
the Greeting Hall
of the Pearly Gates.
Two days later, we drive
home under gray skies,
a little rain like sobs,
a warning.

—Gary Metras

STILL JULY

7:30 P.M.
my first
free moment
in the day
I breathe

air delicious
beautifully lit
layers of blue
and white
sherbert sky

because it is still July
even when
I close my eyes
above
sightless

magnolia fronds
fuzz-tipped
clouds waft
ever so much
like love

but I am here
forever prayer-like
sweet as sherbert
sting
and free

—Fred Gerhard

CLOSING THE BOOK

It's time to close the book,
old friends are now names past.
Memories fade, inner spirit declines,
she's gone, he's quit,
few left to recall.
Today is yesterday, tomorrow never.
Although despair, courage insists.

Join the parade of life,
one-foot steps wearily after another.
The dreary pilgrim
with no one to help or guide
may lose his way.
Why go here or there
as if there were a purpose,
then let it be so.
The spark flares
while descending the worn trail
arriving at the last chapter
ever striving, ever struggling
for that last page that will tell.

—Peter Lesses

DUTY

The Bodies are all buried now/ Or rotted where they lay.
-Keith Wilson, *Graves Registry*

He ventures into battlefields
(moonless nights, rainy days, fog shrouds)
he ventures into battlefields
to retrieve bodies
"We must remember," he says,
"that even the dead have rights.″

Enemy soldiers
covered with frost
enemy soldiers
in fields pocked with craters,
enemy soldiers
sprawled on blasted tanks,
stinking corpses stacked up in trenches,
those in winter uniform top of the pile
those in summer camo underneath
“It’s important for me to bring them all home”—
even his enemies.

No Christmas truce this war,
no hugs exchanged in fellowship,
no brandy traded for schnapps. Here
the transactions are in corpses, their countrymen for his—
solace for grieving mothers? Solace for weeping wives?
"We are humans," he says,
"and we must remember to remain human."

—*Mark Pawlak*

PASSING ON—THROUGH

Yes, we were students of life,
The black and white and all
The incremental grays coloring
Our days. We plotted our plod
To school, taking into account
Shortest distance between two
Points is a straight line. So it was
That our favored route was
To cut across the Holy Cross
Cemetery, forbidden as it was.
But we had calculated
The benefits: quiet, no traffic
To speak of, except for the
Occasional hearse rehearsing
For the next day's business.
Daylight—no ghosts or ghouls
To fuel fright or nightmare.

We read rune stones we pass,
Glimpses of future in the past.
We drilled our arithmetic
Adding or subtracting dates,
Guessing ethnicity, inventing
History. Schooled we were,
Education for the afterlife
We would come to appreciate.
But, at the time, it was only
About getting to school
On time—which we did.
We prayed no one would
Stop or scold us for doing
What we had been told
Not to do. But careful we
Were not to stop or step
On the toes of the dead.

—Bruce Morton

A PROCESSION

The intersection waves through a solemn
single file of cars marked with small flags.

Nothing less than a mirror, the gleaming chrome
of the bumpers, no jargoning stickers.

Is this my invitation? It comes to me
surely as others standing with me here

I'm in the presence of a funeral
procession, having (with no thought to) joined

my hands, with my removed cap in my fingers,
forehead bowed, seized by this spirit of

occasion passing through, surprisingly
capable of evoking at least this gesture

of common respect, as a breath of weather
gathers heavier collars around our shoulders.

Then the hearse drives slowly
past me. Why I cannot say

I raise my hand in a simple wave of hail
and farewell to him or her

the happy soul who holds
a coin for Charon, now at rest within

this ceremony. Today no more need
of excuses for not being at work on time.

No more such thing as time—a swirl of day
and then the night when everybody joins in

with you, lying down and closing their eyes.

—Michael Todd Steffen

LOOKING FOR BETSY

When your John searched everywhere
and failed to find you

at the Farmer's Market, Betsy,
my John picked up a pen

and imagined you there
among toddlers, tulips,

mounds of artichokes and tea—
spillage from a cosmic tote

dumped upside down
by a jokester god.

When your John found no Betsy,
Betsy, and left feeling empty,

my John practiced
his well-worn faith in art,

believing that if he wrote
You are Here,

their mutual Besty
would appear on line

at She-Wolf Bakery and wave.
Your John calls you *his,* Betsy,

when not addressing you directly.
My John's possessive

in a different way,
placing Betsy on this page

with a loaf of sourdough
under her arm

to bring to her John
who is my John too,

when he writes about you.

—*John Skoyles*

THE DARKNESS STALKS

We walk the shadows of the darkest night,
we lift our eyes to hills beyond our sight.
We keep our step, hold our compass line,
we will not stray, our hearts tuned right.

We are the witness, black faces turning white
from sirens and the flash of police light.
Random gunshots rip through the air -
stirring restless men from corners to fight.

The young are speaking out
their voices echo across the earth
Have our established truths lost clout,
as predators of hate twist words' truths?

The young, they protest, they speak
in the streets of 'everytown',
and 'every city': in Cairo, Tehran,
Nairobi, Hong Kong, Milan,
Kabul , Bankok, New York
Rio de Janiero and Santiago
and more.
Have we abandoned our voices.?

Judges in their towers make claims for the laws.
They speak and gesture with clenched claws
in our empty marble halls where they will pause,
and strain to listen or to hear the applause.

They are our puppets mouthing empty tales.
No words to ease the mothers' cries and wails
for the child whose absence make them wild
with grief and storms of rage. All comfort fails.
Your life, it matters, your calls reach our ears.
You shake the ground, you mark graffiti with tears.
We were fed the lies like sweet peach pies,
Our past is remapped, the truth hot spears.

We walk in this valley, and rise in the night.
We stand with mothers who protest and fight.
We know the harm and cannot delay or defend.
We are called to try and make it right.

—Sandra Thaxter

THE HUMMINGBIRD HAWK-MOTH SPEAKS

How many times have you been mistaken
for someone or something else? Every day, here
in the late Tuscan spring, I mind my own business, flying
from catmint to valerian, the morning sunlight raging
above as I hover at the next flower when, a few feet away,
a voice exclaims, “Is that a hummingbird? I didn’t know

there were hummingbirds in Italy!” Of course they didn’t know.
No one is omniscient or infallible; even I make mistakes.
Sometimes I misjudge distances, my proboscis a millimeter away
from a flower’s well. Other times, when I’m flying
in reverse, I back into the closest stalk of blossoms. But right here,
right now, when I ought to forgive, I feel only rage.

Rage because this always happens to me, rage
because all these tourists, these non-residents, keep mistaking
me for this bird I’ve never seen before. Do you know
how tiring it is when others keep refusing to see you in a way
you want to be seen? Once, after flight
brought me to some honeysuckle not far from here,

someone swatted at me, shouted I wasn’t welcome here,
claiming my skull-and-crossbones markings enraged
them, reminding them of *Silence of the Lambs*. Me, mistaken
for a death’s-head hawk-moth? Believe me, I would know
if my ancestors had been omens of the black plague. Flying
into humanity’s path only brings me trouble. I should stay away,

stick to quiet garden corners and uninhabited woods, away
from unwanted attention. Alone time always cools my rage,
and among the flowers, I feel safe, as if my existence is no mistake.
Among the flowers, who I am is something I have always known
and never questioned. Among the flowers, all I hear
are the coos of turtle doves, the beating of pheasant wings in flight,

the drone of nearby violet carpenter bees and flies.
Do you, too, feel the need to get away,
retreat into the shade when the world is raging
over errors egregious or trivial? This is what I know
to be true: Life is meant to be lived in the here
and now, not in the future, or in anger, or in guilt over mistakes.

So now that I have acknowledged my rage, I release it, give it away
to the earth, let it buried here with the detritus of my mistakes.
Only when we know we have freed ourselves can we truly fly.

—Sara Letourneau

HEAVENLY PIPES

Walking down Boston's Mass Ave
beyond the Berklee School of Music,
I heard an unusual sound—
a bagpipe calling, a sweet and haunting tune.
I looked down the next side street,
and there he was, a piper in his kilt
playing on the sidewalk
at the foot of the steps of a church,
with the hearse parked on the street beside him.
Perhaps this was for a Boston policeman
or an army veteran or simply a Scotsman
who in life was enamored of the pipes
and marched or danced to them.
The coffin was carried out of the church,
down the steps, past the piper
and into the waiting hearse.
At that point he stopped his tune
and followed the cascade of mourners
into the vehicles lined up behind.
The hearse then slowly and silently
led the procession past me up the street.

I couldn't help but think:
rather than delicate harps,
why couldn't angels play bagpipes,
a jaunty air to welcome souls to heaven.

—*Keith Tornheim*

WHEN I SAID, DID YOU HEAR—?

When I said emancipate — did you hear exterminate?
When I said reconstruct — did you hear disinherit?
When I said industrial — did you hear agriculture?
When I said reassess — did you hear change address?
When I said election — did you hear dissection?
When I said laws — did you hear flaws?
When I said black guard — did you hear black code?
When I said gumption — did you hear redemption?
When I said citizen — did you hear Ku Klux Klan?
When I said rebellion — did you hear rapscallion?
When I said amendment — did you hear emolument?
When I said constitution — did you hear retribution?
When I said last — did you hear past?
When I said changing — did you hear hanging?
When I said hope — did you hear rope?

When you said honor — did you mean corner?
When you said better — did you mean terror?
When you said bestowed — did you mean black code?
When you said redemption — did you mean not-to-mention?
When you said voting rights — did you mean dark nights?
When you said damnation — did you mean recession?
When you said confession — did you mean recession?
When you said free for all — did you mean free-for-all?
When you said liberty — did you mean hanging tree?
When you said not recognized — did you mean disguised?
When you said educate — did you mean segregate?
When you said report — did you mean deport?
When you said amity — did you mean colony?
When you said recognize — did you mean colonize?
When you said seize the day — did you mean arrest the slave?
When you said relative — did you mean fugitive?
When you said eloquent — did you mean sentiment?
When you said farming — did you mean arming?
When you said never — did you mean river?
When you said reconstruct — did you mean disaffect?
When you said court — did you mean short?
When you said class — did you mean sass?
When you said just cause — did you mean applause?

—*Joyce Wilson*

THE ODYSSEY OF YOU AND ME

I lived in the shadow of who I could be
Trapped in the version you sculpted of me
How we met?
A nightmare I don't repeat
Her body cold beside me, no heartbeat
Took years to remember the night she died
Nineteen and frozen, I couldn't even cry
Wasn't allowed to call 911
Just sat there numb while you were gone

You found me stripping, chasing the fix
I was hooked before I could even resist
Seven years deep, ate when you said
Had to get permission just to be fed
You looked fresh, Movado on your wrist
Diddy-style sweats, never missed a drip
And there I was, lacking, insecure
Hiding layers, shades of fear
Foundation on my skin
Layers masking the truth that was never seen
Never known
I was your mini me, Aaliyah to your R. Kelly
Lost in your world, too scared to be free
Every move I made mirrored your game
But deep down, I was drowning in shame

You liked it when I called you Daddy
Named me baby girl, said I was happy
Roles we played, but I was never free
Just another name in this twisted odyssey
I remember the day you sent me to hunt
MySpace accounts, searching for a third to be stung

A threesome you claimed you deserved
After all, you wed me, kept your word
That day I should've known our journey was done
You met me the same way it had begun
I was your third, but she died that night
Foaming at the mouth, no hope in sight
You told me she survived, said it was all right
But her name was buried out of my sight

Manipulation, you had me under
High on methadone, caught in your thunder
Cotton swabs from the clinic you'd bring

I was lost in your web where I couldn't feel a thing
Riddled with shame and guilt
I searched for a third on ModelMayhem and Craigslist
You pimped me out and I didn't even know it
Convinced it was me who was meant to be sold
Just to sustain this life you created
A story retold
I held on to you, couldn't let you go

Even when you said I was free, it was a show
You didn't want me anymore, but I stayed in the dark
Chained to the silence, afraid of the spark
I believed your lies even when I knew the truth
Afraid of the spark that resided in me

—Diana Kouprina

AN ADDICT'S PLAN FOR
SURVIVING THE DARKNESS

We are the bumps in the night
Loud beats of next-door bass

The grinding in your teeth
As you lay in bed

Hoping for some sleep

We are the moon, straining
And the dust is our stars

But we need more stars
The shimmering kind

The kind that shoots you up
not down
never down

—Matthew Zhao

PTSD #6A

"Why?"
"Why do you leave doors open?"

I only glance an answer
to this demand…

-trying to form words where words don't catch…

I could say,
"It's purely metaphysical."

I could say,
"It is a condition of a synapse created when my personality was forming…"

or simply:
"It seems that…my physical self prefers not to complete the action;
my hand simply drops…

as wood meets latch…

It seems to involve a decision
that can be made later
maybe.

Some doors are okay-
Cupboards are questionable.

My son shut the back door one day
After he found it ajar…

I said, "Hey I am using that!"

"Using what?!" he asked as he stared.

~~"That escape route."~~

—Deanna Witter

WRITERS' BIOS—SPRING, 2025

Kathleen Aguero's latest book is *World Happiness Index* from Tiger Bark Press. Her other poetry collections include *After That*, *Investigations: The Mystery of the Girl Sleuth, Daughter Of*, *The Real Weather*, and *Thirsty Day.* She has also co-edited three volumes of multi-cultural literature for the University of Georgia Press. and teaches in the low-residency M.F.A. program at Lasell University and in Changing Lives Through Literature, an alternative sentencing program.

Michael Ansara spent many years as an activist and an organizer. He is the co-founder of Mass Poetry. He currently serves on the Board of the Redress Movement and the organizing team for Volunteer Blue. His poems have appeared in numerous journals and his essays have appeared in Vox, Arrowsmith, Solstice and Cognoscenti. His first book of poems, *What Remains,* was published in June of 2022 by Kelsay Books. His memoir, *The Hard Work of Hope* has recently been published by Cornell University Press.

Jennifer Barber served as poet laureate of Brookline, Massachusetts from spring 2021 to spring 2025. She is the current series editor of the Tenth Gate Prize at The Word Works. Her most recent book of poems is *The Sliding Boat Our Bodies Made* (2022); her next collection will appear in 2026.

Molly Mattfield Bennett Molly Mattfield Bennett has published in *Ibbetson Street, Off the Coast* and *Solstice,* and was nominated for the Pushcart Prize. Her first book *Name the Glory* was published by Wilderness House Press, and her second *Point-No-Point* was published by FutureCycle Press. Molly is active in the Boston Poetry Community.

Mary Buchinger is the author of seven collections of poetry. Her most recent books are *Navigating the Reach* (honors, 2024 Massachusetts Book Award, Salmon Poetry); *The Book of Shores* (2024); and *Virology* (2022), both from Lily Poetry Review Books. Her work appears in *AGNI, Plume, Salt Hill, Seneca Review,* and elsewhere. She holds a doctorate in linguistics and teaches at the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences.

Patti Cassidy writes-poetry, plays, prose about the places she loves. From the Arizona desert to an island in Narragansett Bay, from a high rise apartment in Boston to a hand built rock house on the Mexican border, she has explored inner and outer worlds and shares them with her readers.

Ruth Chad is a psychologist who lives and works in Boston. Her poems have appeared in *Les Poesies de Montreal, Ibbetson Street, Muddy River Poetry Review, Lily Poetry Review, Writing in a Woman's Voice, Poetry Porch* and many other publications. Her chapbook, *The Sound of Angels*, was published in 2017 by Cervena Barva Press Her new book, *In the Absence of Birds*, was published by Cervena Barva Press in 2024. Ruth was nominated for a Pushcart prize in 2021.

Laura Cherry is the author of the collection *Haunts* (Cooper Dillon Books) and the chapbooks *Two White Beds* (Minerva Rising) and *What We Planted* (Providence Athenaeum). She co-edited the anthology *Poem, Revised* (Marion Street Press) with Robert Hartwell Fiske, and her work has been published in journals including *The Glacier*, *Ekphrastic Review*, *Los Angeles Review*, *Cider Press Review*, and *DMQ Review*. She earned an MFA from the Warren Wilson Program for Writers. She works as a technical writer and lives near Boston.

Llyn Clague lives in Sleepy Hollow, NY. His poems have been published widely, including in *Ibbetson Street, Atlanta Review, Wisconsin Review, California Quarterly, Main Street Rag, New York Quarterly,* and other magazines. His ninth book, *Coming Of Age*, was published by Main Street Rag in 2023. Visit www.llynclague.com

Charles Coe is the author of five books of poetry: *All Sins Forgiven: Poems for my Parents*, *Picnic on the Moon*, *Memento Mori*, *Purgatory Road*, and *Charles Coe: New and Selected Works,* all published by Leapfrog Press. He is also author of *Spin Cycles*, a novella about a homeless man on the streets of Boston, published by Gemma Media. He is adjunct professor of English at Salve Regina University in Newport, Rhode Island, where he teaches in the Master of Fine Arts writing program.

Martha Collins's eleventh book of poetry is *Casualty Reports* (Pittsburgh, 2022); her tenth, *Because What Else Could I Do* (Pittsburgh, 2019), won the Poetry Society of America's William Carlos Williams Award. Collins has received numerous other awards, and in August 2025 will receive the New England Poetry Club's Golden Rose Award. She has also published five volumes of co-translated Vietnamese poetry, including a PEN America award finalist, *Dreaming the Mountain* by Tuệ Sỹ (with Nguyen Ba Chung, Milkweed, 2023). Collins founded the UMass Boston creative writing program and later served as Pauline Delaney Professor of Creative Writing at Oberlin College.

Linda Haviland Conte is the author of the full-length collection *Seldom Purely* and chapbook *Slow as a Poem* (Ibbetson Street Press). Her work has appeared in the anthologies *From the Farther Shore*, *Constellations, Bagels with the Bards*, and *Connecticut River Review*. Linda has been featured in *Verse Daily* and WCAI's Poetry Sunday. She serves on the board of The New England Poetry Club. (lindaconte.net)

Dennis Daly has published eleven books of poetry and poetic translations. His most recent books are *Psalms Composed in Utter Darkness* (Dos Madres, 2023) and *Odd Man Out* (MadHat Press, 2024). Also, the new anthology entitled *Uyghur Poems* (Penguin Random House) includes 13 of Daly's translations of Alisher Navoiy. Please see Daly's blog site, Weights and Measures, at dennisfdaly.blogspot.com.

Wendy Drexler is a recipient of a 2022 artist fellowship from the Massachusetts Cultural Council. Her third collection, *Notes from the Column of Memory,* was published in 2022 by Terrapin Books. Her fourth collection, *Harvest of What Remains,* will be published in March 2026 by Lily Poetry Review.

Luke Dunne is a writer based in Leipzig, Germany. His poetry has been published in various places, including *Shift*. His first play, *Eden*, debuted at the Neues Schauspiel in March 2024, and a film based on his screenplay, *Sweeping,* will be released Summer 2024.

Harris Gardner co-authored *Chalice of Eros* with Lainie Senechal; the second book, *No Time for* Death, was published in February, 2022; and he has two chapbooks: *Lest They Become* and *Among Us*. His poems have been published widely in magazines. He has been the Poetry Editor for *Ibbetson Street* magazine since 2010; was co-founder of Tapestry of Voices and the Boston National Poetry Month Festival with Lainie Senechal and led it from 2001-2021. He has also hosted the First and Last Word Poetry Series with Gloria Mindock since 2010. Harris received the Ibbetson Street Lifetime Achievement Award and a Citation from Massachusetts House of Representatives as well as receiving the Sam Cornish Award from New England Poetry Club.

Fred Gerhard is the author of *Drifting to "Hello"* (Khotso Publishing, 2023) and *Lilacs Still Bloom in Ashburnham: Songs of Spring* (Local Gems Poetry Press, 2023). His poems have appeared in *Anti-Heroin Chic, Blueline, Entropy Magazine, Friends Journal, Pif,* and others. He is an editor for *Quabbin Quills* and *Smoky Quartz.* He lives in rural New England where he runs poetry workshops and open mics. Visit his reading room at FredGerhard.com.

Dori Hale has lived in Somerville, MA, for 50 years. Since leaving high tech 11 years ago, she has published a chapbook, *Disorientation and the Weather* (Finishing Line), and now is nearly through with a full-length collection. Recently, two of her poems published in *Passager* were also chosen for the podcast *Burning Bright*. This is her second appearance in *Ibbetson Street*.

Patricia L. Hamilton is the author of two collections, *The Distance to Nightfall* (Main Street Rag, 2014) and *Even Now* (Kelsay Books, 2025). She won the 2015 and 2017 Rash Award in Poetry and has received three Pushcart Prize nominations. Newly retired from a long career teaching college English, she resides with her husband in Jackson, Tennessee.

Ruth Hoberman is a writer living in Newtonville, Massachusetts. Since her 2015 retirement from Eastern Illinois University, she has published poems and essays in such journals as (most recently) *Salamander, Constellations, SWWIM Every Day*, *Comstock Review,* and *Ploughshares.*

Richard Hoffman is the author of nine books, his two most recent, the poetry collection *People Once Real* and *Remembering the Alchemists and Other Essays* were published in 2023. He is Emeritus Writer in Residence at Emerson College and nonfiction editor of *Solstice: A Magazine of Diverse Voices*.

Madeleine Fuchs Holzer was the first Educator in Residence at the Academy of American Poets. In that role she helped create, and curated, *Teach this Poem*, leading to two volumes of lessons published by Routledge. Her early poems have appeared in *Pearl, The Patterson Literary Review*, other literary magazines, and, more recently, in *Ibbetson Street* and *The New Croton Review*. A former MacDowell resident, Madeleine holds a Masters in English/Creative Writing from NYU and an EdD from Columbia University. She lives in Cambridge, MA.

Stephen Honig is an attorney and author residing in Newton, and a board member of New England Poetry Club. Although his next book will be his second novel, he has published seven prior works of poetry and presently is writing a poetry book with one of his four children, a California-based photographer and artist who has claimed that the author's works reflect too much "lawyer" and not enough Ginsberg.

Robert K. Johnson, now retired, is a former Professor of English, who taught at Suffolk University for many years. For eight years, he was also Poetry Editor of *Ibbetson Street* magazine. His poems have been published individually in a variety of magazines here and abroad. His most recent full-length collections of new poems are *From Mist To Shadows a*nd *Winterberries.*

Ron A. Kalman is a Boston-based poet born in Haifa where his parents immigrated to after leaving Budapest during the Hungarian Uprising of 1956. His poems have been anthologized, translated into several languages and published in nearly a dozen countries. His translations of the Hungarian poet Attila József appeared in the inaugural edition of *The Exquisite Corpse Annual.* His chapbook, *Appearance of the Sun,* is available from Main Street Rag Publishing.

Lawrence Kessenich has written poetry, plays, novels, and essays. He won the 2010 Strokestown International Poetry Prize, and his poetry has been published in *Sewanee Review, Atlanta Review, Poetry Ireland Review,* and many other magazines. Three of his poems were read on NPR's *The Writer's* Almanac and four nominated for the Pushcart Prize. He has published two chapbooks and three full-length books. He has also published two novels, *Cinnamon Girl* and *The Further Adventures of Daisy Miller*. His plays have been performed in several states. All of his books are available on his website: lawrence-writer.com.

Karen Klein Emerita, Brandeis, English/American Literature faculty. At retirement, she continued her creative activities: contemporary moderndance performances (*Prometheus Elders, ATAD, teXtmoVes*); visual artists'books; haiku&contemporary lyric publications. First full-length lyric poetry *This Close* (Ibbetson Press,2022); chapbook *Embodied* (Finishing Line Press, 2025); Circularity(Toronto, 2025) Scott Ponemone, linocuts; Karen Klein, haiku.

Ted Kooser's most recent book is *Seven Skies All at Once*, his sixth children's picture book (ages 4 to 8) from Candlewick Press, written by Ted and illustrated by Matt Myers.

Diana Kouprina is a stateless Russian-Armenian-American poet and memoirist. Her debut book, *Borderline: A Poetic Memoir* (Wild Press, 2025), weaves verse and prose to chronicle her survival of statelessness, domestic violence, and mental illness. Her poetry has been published in *Spare Change News* and the *Massachusetts Poetry Bards Anthology*, and was recognized by Wingless Dreamer. She writes to reclaim voice and belonging—for herself and for anyone who's ever felt invisible. *Borderline* is available at Lovestruck and The Harvard Bookstore.

Danielle Legros Georges was a poet, translator, and editor whose books include *The Dear Remote Nearness of You* (2016); *Island Heart*, translations of the Haitian-French poet Ida Faubert (2021); *Wheatley at 250: Black Women Poets Re-imagine the Verse of Phillis Wheatley Peters* (2023); *Blue Flare: Three Haitian Poets*, translations (2024); and *Three Leaves, Three Roots: Poems on the Haiti-Congo Story* (Beacon Press, 2025). She was the Poet Laureate of Boston and a Professor Emerita of creative writing at Lesley University.

Deborah Leipziger is an author, poet, and advisor on sustainability. She was born in Brazil, and her poems have been published in ten countries. Her poetry collection, *Story & Bone*, was published by Lily Poetry Review Books in 2023. She is the author of several books on human rights and sustainability. Deborah is part of the 2025-2026 cohort of the Jews of the Americas Fellows, selected by Brandeis University. She has had residencies from T S Eliot House and received grants from the Massachusetts Cultural Council and JArts. Her next poetry collection, *Tell Me*, is forthcoming in 2026 from Lily Poetry Review Books.

Peter Lesses was a classical musician in performance and became a composer in later years. For the last 20+ years he has been an antique dealer and more recently a volunteer at the Somerville Museum. He had poems published in the *Gloucester Review* and the *Somerville Times*. Favorite poets: Walt Whitman, Robert Lowell and John Greenleaf Whittier. He enjoys reading anonymous medieval poetry.

Sara Letourneau is the author of *Wild Gardens* (Kelsay Books, 2024). She's also a book editor and writing coach at Heart of the Story Editorial & Coaching Services; the cofounder and cohost of the Pour Me a Poem open mic in Mansfield, Massachusetts; and the co-editor of the Pour Me a Poem anthology. Her latest work can be found in *Autumn Sky Poetry Daily*, *The Ekphrastic Review*, *Silver Birch Press*, *The Somerville Times*, *The Table Review*, and *Wild Greens*. Sara lives in Foxboro, Massachusetts.

Miriam Manglani lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts with her husband and three children. She graduated with a degree in English from Brandeis University and works full-time as a Technical Training Manager. Her poems have been published in various magazines and journals including *Sparks of Calliope, One Art, Glacial Hills Review,* and *Paterson Literary Review.* Her poetry book, *Invisible Lines*, was published by Kelsay Books. Read her published work on her website: https://www.miriammanglani.com.

Eileen McCluskey's poetry has appeared in Main Street Rag, on WBUR's Radio Boston, in Rufous City Review, Ibbetson Street, 6S, Haiku Journal, Boston College Magazine, and other publications. Eileen has several micro chapbooks with Origami Poems Project, including the popular *Divorce Haiku.* Her chapbook, *Topless*, was published by Main Street Rag. Eileen was among the poets included in the Wickford Art Association's 2019 collaborative reading and exhibit with poets and painters. She was a finalist in The Poetry Loft 2015 Chapbook Contest, and in the Cambridge Poetry Awards 2012 competition.

Gary Metras has published in such journals as *Cholla Needles, Gargoyle, Ibbetson Street, Poetry East, Poetry*, and *North Dakota Quarterly*, along with thirteen chapbooks and nine books of poetry, most recently, *Marble Dust* (Cervena Barva Press, 2024).

Gloria Mindock is editor of Červená Barva Press, an award-winning author of six poetry collections, two book translations in Romanian and Serbian, and three chapbooks. Her poems have been published and translated into twelve languages. Her recent book is *Grief Touched the Sky at Night* (Glass Lyre Press). Gloria was the Poet Laureate in Somerville, MA in 2017 and 2018, and in 2024 was the recipient of the Sam Cornish Award by the New England Poetry Club.

Ryan Clinesmith Montalvo's manuscript *Epilogue to Paradise* was a 2025 Trio House Press' Open Reading Book Award Finalist, a Letras Latinas-ILS/ND-Andres Montoya Poetry Prize Finalist, and 2024 Akron Poetry Prize Finalist. Ryan holds an Ed.M. from the Harvard Graduate School of Education, an M.F.A. in poetry from Hunter College, and a B.F.A. in Poetry and Literature from Emerson College. Ryan's poetry has been published in *Ibbetson Street, Heavy Feather Review, Indolent Books,* and elsewhere.

Bruce Morton divides his time between Montana and Arizona. He is the author of two poetry collections: *Planet Mort* (2024) and *Simple Arithmetic & Other Artifice*s (2014). A chapbook, *Olive-drab Khaki Blues*, is forthcoming from Foot Hills Publishing. His poems have appeared in numerous online and print venues. He was formerly dean at the Montana State University library.

Alfred Nicol's collection of poems, *After the Carnival*, was published this spring by Wiseblood Books. His translation of *One Hundred Visions of War* by Julien Vocance has been called "an essential addition to the history of modernist poetry." As part of the music-and-poetry ensemble The Diminished Prophets, Nicol has performed *melopoeia* for over twenty years with Rhina Espaillat and classical/flamenco guitarist John Tavano.

Tomas O'Leary is a poet, translator, squeezebox player, singer, artistic doodler, and expressive therapist. His books of poetry are *A Prayer for Everyone, The Devil Take a Crooked House***,** and *Fool at the Funeral***.** A volume of new and selected poems is due this fall from Lynx House Press. He has taught literature, creative writing, journalism and Spanish to college, high school, and first grade people. For the past 20 years he has worked with elderly folks, most with Alzheimer's, in song and spirited verbal exchange. O'Leary's Irish accordion was made in China.

Kurt Olsson has published two award-winning collections of poetry. His second collection, *Burning Down Disneyland* (Gunpowder Press), won the Barry Spacks Prize. His first collection, *What Kills What Kills Us* (Silverfish Review Press)*,* won the Gerald Cable Book Award and was subsequently awarded the 2008 Towson University Prize for Literature, given to the best book published the previous year by a Maryland writer. His third collection, *The Unnumbered Anniversaries,* is due out in 2025 from Fernwood Press. Olsson's poems have appeared in many journals, including *Poetry, The New Republic, Southern Review,* and *The Threepenny Review.*

Mark Pawlak is the author of ten poetry collections, most recently *Away Away* (Arrowsmith Press, 2024), and the memoir *My Deniversity: Knowing Denise Levertov* (MadHat Press, 2021). His poems have been translated into German, Japanese, Polish, and Spanish, and have been performed at Teatr Polski in Warsaw. In English, his poems and prose have appeared widely in anthologies such as *The Best American Poetry* and *Blood to Remember: American Poets on the Holocaust*, among many other places.

Marge Piercy is the auithor of 20 poetry collections, most recently *On the Way Hout, Shut Off the Light*; 17 novels including *Women on the Edge of Time, Gone to Soldiers, Three Women, He She and It* and *Sex Wars*. *The Hour of My Death* is forthcoming next fall. Her work is translated into 24 languages and she's given readings, workshops or lectures in 570 venues here and abroad. margepiercy.com.

Denise Provost has published two poetry collections, and poems in *Ibbetson Street, Muddy River, qarrtsiluni, Poetry Porch, Constellations,* and *Light Quarterly*. Twice Pushcart-nominated, Provost won Best Love Sonnet in the 2012 Maria C. Faust Sonnet Competition; the 2021 Samuel Washington Allen Prize and was elected co-president of New England Poetry Club in 2022.

Steven Ratiner is the author of *Grief's Apostrophy*, published by Beltway Editions in 2025. He's also published three poetry chapbooks and a collection of poetry interviews. His work has appeared in scores of journals in America and abroad, including *Parnassus, Agni, Hanging Loose, Poet Lore, Salamander, QRLS* (Singapore), and *Poetry Australia*. He's also written poetry criticism for The Christian Science Monitor, The San Francisco Chronicle, and *The Washington Post*. *Giving Their Word: Conversations with Contemporary Poets* was reissued in a paperback edition (University of Massachusetts Press). He is Poet Laureate Emeritus for Arlington, Massachusetts, and was just elected as President of the New England Poetry Club, one of the oldest literary associations in America. His weekly Red Letter Poems features a diverse range of poets, from up-and-coming talents to some of the most important voices in contemporary poetry. (steven.arlingtonlaureate@gmail.com).

Hilary Sallick is the author of *Love is a Shore* (Lily Poetry Review Books, 2023), long-listed for the 2024 Massachusetts Book Award; and *Asking the Form* (Cervena Barva Press, 2020). Her poems appear in *Action, Spectacle; Halfway Down the Stair*s; *Permafrost; Potomac Review; Notre Dame Review;* and elsewhere. A teacher with a longtime focus on adult literacy, she lives in Somerville, MA. (www.hilarysallick.com)

Carla Schwartz's poems appear in *The Practicing Poet* and her collections *Signs of Marriage, Mother, One More Thing*, and *Intimacy with the Wind*. Learn more: https://carlapoet.com, or all social media @cb99videos. Recent/upcoming curations: *Contemporary Haibun Online, Drifting Sands, Eunoia Review, Modern Haiku, New Verse* Review, *North Dakota Quarterly, One Art, and Rattle*. Carla Schwartz received the NEPC Cummings Prize.

Claire Scott is an award-winning poet who has received multiple Pushcart Prize nominations. Her work has appeared in the *Atlanta Review, Bellevue Literary Review, New Ohio Review* and *Healing Muse*, among other journals. Claire is the author of *Waiting to be Called* and *Until I Couldn't.* She is the co-author of *Unfolding in Light: A Sisters' Journey in Photography and Poetry.*

Zvi A. Sesling, Brookline, MA Poet Laureate (2017-2020), is a five-time poetry and flash fiction Pushcart Prize nominee. He has published eight books of poetry. Sesling edits *10 By 10 Flash Fiction Stories*. His flash fiction includes *Secret Behind the Gate, Wheels* and *40 Stories,* co-authored with Paul Beckman. His *Selected and New Poetry* will be published this Fall. He lives in Brookline, Massachusetts. with his wife Susan J. Dechter.

John Skoyles' work has recently appeared in *The Nation* and *Commonweal*. Two books are forthcoming: A novel, *All the Question Marks* (Unbound Edition Press) and poems, *Three Wishes* (Carnegie-Mellon University Press).

Michael Todd Steffen's third book of poetry, *I Saw My Life,* is forthcoming from Lily Press. Joan Houlihan has noted the poet's *"*intimate portraits, sense of history, surprising wit and the play of dark and light…the striking combination of the everyday and the transcendent*.*"

Tim Suermondt's sixth full-length book of poems *A Doughnut And The Great Beauty Of The World* came out in 2023 from MadHat Press and Dos Madres Press will be publishing his next collection, *A Day in the Republic*, later this year. He has published in *Poetry, Ploughshares, Prairie Schooner, The Georgia Review, Bellevue Literary Review, Stand Magazine, Smartish Pace, Barrow Street, Amsterdam Review* and *Plume*, among many others. He lives in Cambridge (MA) with his wife, the poet Pui Ying Wong.

Sandra Thaxter lives in Newburyport, Massachusetts. She studies with Alred Nicol, Rhina Espaillat and benefits from the active poetry community in Newburyport. She has published Two chap books with Finishing Line Press. She studied Comparative Literature at Indiana University and enjoys translating.

Keith Tornheim has six books of poetry, *Fireflies: Poems of Love and Family*; *I Am Lilith, Dancer on the Wind*; *Spoiled Fruit: Adam and Eve in Eden and Beyond; Spirit Boat: Poems of Crossing Over*; *Can You Say Kaddish for the Living?*; *The Sacrifice of Isaac*. His poems have appeared in *Ibbetson Street*, *The Somerville Times*, *Boston Literary Magazine, Muddy River Poetry Review* and *Poetica*.

Lee Varon is a social worker and writer. Her latest poetry collection, *The Last Bed*, was published in 2024. She is author of two children's books, *My Brother is Not a Monster: A Story of Addiction and Recovery* (2021), and *A Kids Book About Overdose*. (2024).

Rachel Weintraub's poems have appeared in *Boulevard*, *Poet & Critic*, *Poetry Porch*, *Salamander*, and *The Wexford Bohemian*, among other U.S. and Irish literary journals. Recipient of a MFA from Columbia University, Rachel has served on the boards of several literary organizations including Four Way Books, Parnassus: Poetry in Review Foundation, Poets House, and Salamander. She teaches the study of Ekphrastic Poetry and is completing work on her poetry collection *Water In Trees*.

Joyce Wilson is editor of *The Poetry Porch* (www.poetryporch.com), a literary magazine on the Internet since 1997. Her poems have appeared in many literary journals, among them *Alabama Literary Review*, *The Hudson Review*, and *Poetry Ireland*. Her chapbook *The Need for a Bridge* and a full-length collection *Take and Receive* were both published in 2019. A sequence of poems "The Octagonal Schoolhouse" won the Samuel Washington Allen Honorable Mention Prize from the New England Poetry Club in 2023.

Deanna Witter Deanna Witter has been crafting poetry and workshopping it with the Beehive Poetry Workshop and previously attended workshops of Steven Kramer and the late Poet Laureate, Danielle Legros Georges. She also counts Mary Oliver, Martha Collins, Mary Buchinger, Joshua Nguyen, and Linda Carney Goodrich among so many, as influences for her in the ongoing metamorphic art of wordsmithing. She presented at a literature festival in Lowell while finishing her undergrad in English at Lesley. She continues the craft by exploring open mics and poetry festivals.

Matthew Zhao has been a finalist in the National Poetry Series and *Mississippi Review* Poetry Prize, and a semifinalist in the Word Works Washington Prize, Longleaf Press Book Prize, and Anthony Hecht Poetry Prize. His poetry appears or is forthcoming in *swamp pink, Four Way Review, Frontier Poetry, Summerset Review, Indianapolis Review, Shade Journal, BoomerLitMag, Diode Poetry Journal,* and others.